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Security Information

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General                      DATE: 14 April 1952

FROM:                      Assistant to the Director

SUBJECT:                      Accountability of CIA to the Public on its  
                                 Expenditure of Public Funds

1. John H. Adams, correspondent for U. S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, called today to size up story prospects for a treatment of the U. S. intelligence system. Initially he had explored the desirability of inventorying a dozen or more "intelligence failures" as a springboard for the tale. I do believe that we have safely diverted him from that approach. Lacking another, he is minded to shelve the tale a few months or more.

2. While interested generally in the activities of CIA, Adams was especially concerned with the agency's lack of public accountability. "Is there anyone," he asked, "who knows enough about what you're doing to determine whether you're doing a good job or bad job?"

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3. Aside from the Bureau of the Budget, obviously, there is not. CIA has grown to be a [REDACTED] pig in a poke.

4. Once before I referred to the danger implicit in this lack of accountability. The statement was made in a memo of mine on November 22nd:

"Admittedly CIA is a super-sensitive agency--but it is also an executive agency with characteristics common to all executive agencies of government. It acts (like others) in the public interest; it is supported (like others) by public funds. And like all others, CIA is accountable in the end to public opinion.

"Because CIA is a sensitive agency, it is exempted from the ordinary scrutiny to which most agencies are subjected. However, this exemption is a privilege, not a right; and like most privileges it entails obligations. If CIA would warrant this exemption, then CIA must also establish such standards of integrity and performance that it can conscientiously claim the confidence it contends it must have."

5. High standards, however, are not enough. The Director is still, to all intents and purposes, his own and only overseer. Since he is not required to account in detail to anyone other than the Bureau of the Budget, perhaps he should recommend some form of accountability that he need not be compelled to carry this [REDACTED] dollar bag alone.

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6. I would recommend that serious consideration be given a proposal for the establishment of a Presidential Commission which would periodically survey the activities of CIA and report its findings independently and objectively to the President of the United States. The public relations value of such a commission is self-evident. At the same time, I recognize that such a commission might tend to usurp the authority of the Director. But should not this danger of usurpation be balanced against the risks that attend this present system in which the Director alone is competent to judge how competently he spends his funds.

25X1 **SIGNED**

Colonel, USAF

ODCI/CBH:nhh

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